RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

LEAFLETS

of

POPULAR INFORMATION

No. 2 April, 1938

NEMOPHILA MACULATA

SPOTTED NEMOPHILA

Prepared

by

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

of the

NATIVE PLANTS OF CALIFORNIA

Santa Ana Canyon

Orange County

California

LOS ANGELES COUNTY
DEPT. ARBORETA & BOTANIC GARDENS

No. 2 April 1938

NEMOPHILA MACULATA

SPOTTED NEMOPHILA

Hydrophyllaceae Waterleaf Family

Low annual a few inches high, spreading to about 1 ft. Herbage light green, somewhat succulent, lightly hairy. Leaves opposite, 1 to 2 in. long, oblong, pinnately parted mainly above the middle into 5 to 9 rounded lobes. Peduncles erect, bearing a solitary flower. Calyx lobes 5, nearly $\frac{1}{2}$-in. long, with a reflexed lobe in each sinus. Petals 5, widely spreading, distinct to near the base, $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 in. long, broadly ovate, white with light purple veins and numerous purple dots at the base and a large purple blotch at the tip. Basal portion of each petal with a scale, the margins inrolled and hairy. Open flowers measure about $1\frac{1}{2}$ in. across. Stamens 5, attached at the base of the corolla; filaments about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. long; anthers purple, 2-celled, versatile. Ovary superior, 1-celled; style 2-parted for its upper third. Capsule spherical, about $\frac{1}{4}$ in. in diameter, with 6 to 8 seeds.

Nemophila maculata was described by Bentham, an English botanist, in 1848, based upon a collection by Hartweg from the Sierra Nevada foothills east of Sacramento. There is also a variety concolor described by Brand in which the flowers lack the terminal blotch of purple on the petals. There are about 18 species of Nemophila from North America, and mainly from California. In addition to N. maculata there is another very lovely species, N. menziesi (Baby Blue Eyes), which has sky blue flowers, is widespread and is one of the most delightful of all Nemophilas.

In the Sierra Nevada foothills and adjacent valleys the low meadows are often carpeted with great masses of Spotted Nemophila in the early spring. It is plentiful from Tulare and Fresno Counties to Nevada County. Except in very early seasons the flowers do not appear until early May, when for a few weeks they dominate large areas, to be followed by other later blooming annuals, often equally beautiful. It is unlikely that this species will suffer from excessive picking, since it grows mainly away from the large centers of population. Agriculture and grazing are reducing many fine stands, but the

species will probably not become rare in the wild for at least a generation.

Spotted Nemophilas have been in cultivation for years, but are almost unknown in California gardens. First plantings at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden were for the 1934 season and were immediately successful. Seeds may be drilled in rows or broadcast on loose soil. When spaced about a foot apart the mature plants will completely cover the ground. They do best in full sun in light loamy soils and should be planted in the fall for best results. They will also grow in heavy soils. Plantings made as late as January and February may be given partial shade. After the plants are started they should be kept moist and will stand fertilizing. First flowers appear in March and the plants will continue to bloom until May. Quantities of seed are produced and the seed is easily harvested since the capsules remain closed for some time. In our fields the species readily re-seeds itself and springs up after the first fall rains. It is possible also to grow plants in flats or beds and transplant while small.

As a bedding plant for low borders and masses Spotted Nemophila is one of the finest native species. It may readily be substituted for Pansies for variety in the garden. Although it is not particularly suitable for cut flowers, it may be used in low bowls and will keep for many days.

In cultivation the plants are hardy and have few insect or fungous enemies.

This little annual has endeared itself to us during the past few years and has also been greeted with such delight by many of our visitors that we feel it should be in general use in nearly every garden. Its culture is so simple that one can hardly make a failure and the flowers are so numerous that a veritable carpet of white and purple is one's reward.

Seeds are available from some of the seed houses, and it is likely that if the plant is popularized that some of the nurserymen will offer small plants for sale just as they now have Pansies or Asters.

RANCHO SANTA ANA BOTANIC GARDEN

Of The Native Plants of California.

Established 1927

In Memory of John W. Bixby

- o O o -

Purpose: A scientific institution devoted to the growth and study of the native plants of California for their botanical, horticultural and popular features.

- o O o -

MAIL ADDRESS

R. F. D., Anaheim, California

- o O o -

Reissued without change of text, April, 1941